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SERMON BY THE REV. BENJAMIN DORR.
SERMON BY THE REV. WM. H. HART.

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ON KNOWING EACH OTHER IN THE WORLD OF SPIRITS.

A Sermon

BY THE REV. BENJAMIN DORR,
RECTOR OF TRINITY CHURCH, UTICA, ONEIDA COUNTY, NEW YORK.

1 Corinthians, xiii. 12.—"*Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.*"

THIS was the declaration of an inspired apostle; of one who enjoyed clearer communications of Divine mysteries than were usually given, even to inspired men. He himself tells us that he had been *caught up into the third heaven*, the glorious residence of JEHOVAH, and there heard such *unspeakable words* as no mortal had ever before heard, and *which it was not lawful*, or possible, *for him to utter*. Yet, after having been favored with *abundance of revelations*, he confesses the present imperfection of his knowledge, compared with that fulness of understanding which should hereafter be given him. *For now*, he says, *we see through a glass darkly;* our vision is obscured by the imperfect medium through which we discern spiritual objects; but hereafter, when this veil of flesh is removed, we shall see *face to face;* clearly and perfectly. *Now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.*

And if such, my brethren, were the confessions of St. Paul, when his understanding was enlightened by immediate Divine revelation, with how much greater propriety may *we* adopt his language and say *now we know in part!* Here our faculties, even when most cultivated, are confined within a very narrow compass,—our prospects are bounded by a very limited horizon. And this im-

perfection of human knowledge extends both to the *natural* and *spiritual* world.

How little do we know of the *natural* world! The greatest discoveries of human science have only served to exhibit to man his weakness and his ignorance. The astronomer has endeavored to explore those vast worlds which roll above us, and has succeeded so far as to determine the size, and distance, and periodical revolutions of a few of those heavenly orbs, which lie within our own system; but here his discoveries end. He knows not how many millions of worlds extend beyond these into the regions of infinite space; nor can he tell what mysterious chain connects these immense bodies to their respective systems, or reveal the power, which, by Divine command, causes them to move with such perfect order and harmony. As little does he know of the beings which inhabit them.

The philosopher has investigated a small number of the objects on the surface of our earth; he has penetrated a few fathoms into its bosom; but, with all his wisdom, he cannot comprehend the wonderful mechanism of the smallest insect that flutters in a summer's sun, nor tell what pencil painted the lowliest flower that blossoms in the vale; neither can he understand how a grain of sand, or a blade of grass is formed.

And if our knowledge of the *natural* world is thus limited, that of the *spiritual* world is much more confined. We *see* it *through a glass darkly;* we *know* it *but in part.* The book of revelation has made us as fully acquainted, perhaps, with the invisible world, as our limited faculties would allow, or our present state required. It has made known to us, in some degree, the nature and attributes of JEHOVAH; but how very imperfect are our conceptions, even of these! What clear ideas, for example, can we form of a Being purely spiritual, who never had a beginning, and who can never have an end? What distinct notions have we of GOD'S omnipotence, which nothing can resist; of his omniscience, from which nothing is concealed; of his omnipresence, which equally pervades all space? *Behold,* says Job, GOD *is great and we know him not; neither can the number of his years be searched out!* We see, indeed, the operations of His hands, and His *works are*

manifest; but when the mind of man attempts to rise above the clear discoveries of revelation, it is "lost in endless mazes." *Canst thou by searching find out* GOD? *Canst thou find out* THE ALMIGHTY *unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?*

How imperfect is our knowledge of GOD's *providential dispensations!* How mysterious are most of His proceedings in the moral government of the universe! Why is it that the wicked enjoy so great a share of worldly prosperity, while the righteous are often doomed to penury and suffering? The Psalmist *thought to understand this; but it was too hard for him, until he went into the sanctuary of* GOD.* Why is the young man cut off suddenly, in the bloom and vigor of life, and the hoary-headed sinner permitted to go down to the grave by leisurely decay? To questions such as these there can be but one reply: GOD's *ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts.*

How little do we know, even of *our own minds!* We are "a mystery to ourselves!" "We know not what our soul is, otherwise than by its operations." We cannot tell how the soul is united to the body, nor by what mysterious process ideas are treasured up in the memory. Of the inhabitants of the invisible world—of the angels, who are *ministering spirits,*—the mode of their subsistence, their employment and duties, we know comparatively nothing. All these are subjects too vast for human comprehension. We see them, as it were, *through a glass darkly;* we *know* them but *in part.* But when the Christian shall have thrown off this covering of flesh, which clogs all the faculties of the soul, and his disembodied spirit rises to the mansions of everlasting light, *then shall he see face to face;* and *know even as he is known.* All the treasures of knowledge will be unlocked to his admiring gaze, and his thirsty soul will drink of those fountains of wisdom, which flow from the throne of the ETERNAL. We may presume that he will be made acquainted with all those mysteries which are not now revealed, both in the book of nature and

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* Psalms lxxiii, 15.

of grace. In a word, the saints in light will be as wise, as they will be happy; will see clearly as they are now seen, and know as perfectly as they are now known of GOD.

But there is one question connected with this subject, which is often anxiously asked, and which I shall make the subject of consideration for the remainder of this discourse; WHAT SHALL WE KNOW OF OUR FRIENDS IN ANOTHER LIFE? and HOW FAR WILL THE ATTACHMENTS WHICH BIND US HERE, BE CONTINUED HEREAFTER? It is a question of universal interest; and is not without its practical utility. All of us have seen many of our dearest friends and acquaintances removed to the world of spirits, and it is natural for us to inquire whether we shall ever meet to recognise each other again; and, if so, whether those feelings of affection, which we now cherish, will remain after death.

That departed spirits will know each other, and that, among them, the endearments of friendship will be renewed, seems to be agreeable to the soundest dictates of *reason*, and the clearest intimations of *Scripture*.

The doctrine is perfectly consonant to *reason*. Unless it be true that the souls of the righteous possess this knowledge, their views of GOD'S wisdom, and justice, and mercy, must necessarily be very imperfect in a future state. The veracity of Him *who cannot lie*, seems to stand pledged to assure us that he has, agreeably to his promises, conferred a superior degree of glory on those, whose sufferings for the truth, and whose faith and patience in this life, were most conspicuous. Surely it will give us more exalted views of the faithfulness and love of JEHOVAH, to know that he has bestowed the greatest rewards on those, who were distinguished for the greatest virtues; that the faith of an Abraham, the meekness of a Moses, the patience of a Job, the zeal of a Paul, and the fidelity of that host of apostles and martyrs, who suffered, *not accepting deliverance*, have been rewarded with a greater measure of bliss and glory. But to know this, it seems necessary that we should know the persons thus distinguished.

Again: we may reasonably suppose that a considerable part of the happiness of the saints will arise from a retrospection of those trials and difficulties which they have mutually undergone, and

through which GOD has so mercifully conducted them. It must certainly be a delightful employment, and calculated to increase their gratitude and joy, for those who have travelled together through life, sharing in each other's cares and sorrows, *enduring* the same *fight of afflictions*, and struggling against the same temptations, to retrace the scenes through which they have passed, and to contrast their former *light afflictions*, with their present *eternal weight of glory*. We are warranted, therefore, in saying that this doctrine is in accordance with the soundest dictates of *reason*.

Let us now see what intimations we have of it in *Scripture*. To my own mind, the text alone, which says that hereafter we shall *see face to face*, and *know even as we are also known*, is a conclusive argument in its favor. There are, however, some other passages evidently implying that departed spirits will know each other, and be happier for that knowledge. Thus we read that when David's child was dead, he consoled himself with the reflection that he himself should hereafter go to the same place, whither the spirit of his infant had gone: *I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.** Yet this reflection could be no source of comfort to the Israelitish monarch, under his present bereavement, unless he had expected to meet, and recognise, his child again.

At the time of our Savior's transfiguration on the Mount, when he appeared in his matchless glory, Moses and Elias also appeared in the glorified bodies with which all the saints in light will hereafter be clothed. And their being known by those apostles, who were with our LORD at the time, is a clear intimation that the saints will know each other in a future state.

But a still more conclusive passage—and the only one which I shall now notice—is to be found in St. Paul's first epistle to the Thessalonians. *For what*, he asks, *is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our* LORD JESUS CHRIST *at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy.*† Here, this great apostle evidently anticipates with delight, the time when he should present these persons before the throne, "as the

* 2. Sam. xii. 23. † 1. Thess., ii. 19. 20

seals," to borrow the language of the pious Doddridge, "which God had been pleased to set to his labors, and as amiable friends, in whose converse and love he hoped to be forever happy."

On this text the learned Dr. McKnight thus beautifully remarks: "the manner in which the apostle speaks of the Thessalonians, shows that he expected to know his converts at the day of judgment. If so, we may hope to know our relations and friends then. And, as there is no reason to think, that in the future life we shall lose those natural and social affections, which constitute so great a part of our present enjoyment, may we not expect that these affections, purified from every thing animal and terrestrial, will be a source of our happiness in that life likewise? It must be remembered, however, that in the other world we shall love one another, not so much on account of the relation and friendship which formerly subsisted between us, as on account of the knowledge and virtue which we possess. For among rational beings, whose affections will all be suited to the high state of moral and intellectual perfection, to which they shall be raised, the most endearing relations and warmest friendships will be those which are founded on excellence of character. What a powerful consideration this, to excite us to cultivate in our relations and friends, the noble and lasting qualities of knowledge and virtue, which will prove such a source of happiness to them, and to us, through the endless ages of eternity!"

To this doctrine I know of but one considerable objection. If it be true that departed spirits know each other, will it not be a source of unhappiness to the Christian to find that many, whom he had loved on earth, are not among the number of the blessed in heaven; and consequently, that they must be in a state of everlasting wretchedness and despair! This objection, if it have any weight, will apply with equal force to our knowing, as we certainly must know, that any part of the human family has been condemned to eternal punishment. At the great day of final account we shall all behold a lasting separation made between the righteous and the wicked; yet it cannot be supposed that the condemnation of the latter, will, in the least degree, disturb the felicity of the former. To this it may be added that the omniscient

JEHOVAH, whose *tender mercies are over all his works*,—the Divine Redeemer, who *came into the world to save sinners*, and the blessed angels, who now rejoice when *one sinner repenteth*,—have all a perfect knowledge of the sufferings of the wicked; yet can we, for a moment, think that they are less happy for such knowledge? And why may it not be the same with respect to the glorified saints?

The truth appears to be this: we shall then have such enlarged views of GOD's holiness, wisdom, and justice,—we shall so clearly discern the reasons for the condemnation of the wicked,—as fully to acquiesce in their sentence, and adore the justice which punishes them, not less than the mercy which spares us. We may, therefore, easily conceive that it will add much to the Christian's happiness to meet many of his friends in heaven, while the reflection that some, whom he loved on earth, are not there, will not be permitted to mar his felicity.

I proceed to consider the practical uses and application of this doctrine. He who thinks it of no practical importance, and that it can have no influence on our conduct through life, has little knowledge of the human heart, and is a stranger to the kindliest feelings, and the holiest charities, of our nature.

Not such the views of HIM, who, when about to be separated from his beloved disciples on earth, assured them of their reunion in heaven. With what affectionate earnestness does he press upon them this consolatory truth! *Let not your hearts be troubled; in my Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you;* THAT WHERE I AM THERE YE MAY BE ALSO. What else could have reconciled the followers of CHRIST to so painful a separation? What else could have cheered their hearts under every difficulty and danger, and enabled them to embrace death in its most horrid forms,—but the firm belief, and assured expectation, that, whenever they departed, they should BE WITH CHRIST?

Was it not, think you, a cheering declaration to the penitent thief upon the cross, pronounced by One who held *the keys of death and hell—This day shalt thou be* WITH ME *in paradise!*

Did the Israelitish monarch derive no consolation from the pros-

pect of a reunion with his beloved child, when he uttered that feeling exclamation, before mentioned, *I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me?*

Think not, then, that this doctrine is of no practical importance. Every friend, *who dies in the* LORD, adds but another tie to heaven.—The hope of being reunited to them in the other world awakens our sluggish zeal, and excites us to press forward the more earnestly towards the mark, for that prize which they have already attained.

Say, ye who now weep over the mouldering ashes of a pious friend,—ye who have ever dropped a tear into the grave of one dear to you as your own soul,—has not their departure to the world of spirits disposed you to make a more diligent preparation to follow them? Has it not excited you to greater care and watchfulness, lest the separation should prove eternal? As a child, have you not been cheered by the prospect of a reunion with your sainted parents? As a parent, have you not joyfully anticipated a meeting with the disembodied spirits of your children? As a husband, or wife, have you not looked forward with delight to the moment when you should rejoin the partner of your bosom? As an affectionate brother, or sister, or friend, have you not longed for an inseparable union with those with whom you *took sweet counsel* here; and ardently prayed that it might be said of you as it was of Saul and Jonathan, *they were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided?*

Oh! if there is a delightful scene on earth, it is that of a pious family, going hand in hand together to the same mansions of everlasting rest—cheering each other with the hopes and consolations of religion—animating each other's faith, and smoothing life's rough and thorny path with mutual helps and reciprocal affections. It is here they have commenced that happy union, which they hope to continue more perfectly in heaven. And as often as death enters their dwelling, and their little social circle narrows, they console themselves with the thought that, in another world, their happiness will be perfect, and their union indissoluble.

And how ought this thought to excite us to labor the more earnestly for the salvation of those with whom we are now connected!

The attachments of kindred and affection—all the domestic charities which make life pleasant, and death painful—every one who is stamped with the form of humanity must have felt. Surely, if these ties are dear to us now, it is our interest, not less than our duty to do all in our power to make them lasting as eternity. Let these hopes, therefore, which the Gospel inspires, exert their proper influence on our lives. Let them teach us to be perfectly resigned to the departure of our Christian friends, and incite us to make diligent preparation to follow them, whenever it shall please GOD to call us. Let us often call to mind the blessedness of *the dead, who die in the* LORD, and endeavor, through the assistance of Divine grace, to fit ourselves for a participation in their glories and their joys. Amid all the cares, and afflictions, and temptations of this mortal life, let us consider the glorious *cloud of witnesses* which surround us, and *run with patience the race that is set before us; looking unto* JESUS, *the author and finisher of our faith.* Let it be our constant endeavor "to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life," that so we may be prepared for admission into his immediate presence, where we shall *see face to face, and know even as we are known.* Associated there with the wisest and best beings in the universe, our knowledge and happiness will be continually increasing. We shall drink of the fountain of living waters, be fed with the fruit of the tree of life—and, throughout the rolling ages of eternity, shall participate in all the unspeakable bliss and glory of that heaven where there is *fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore.*

"REMEMBER THE DEAD."

Who ever look'd upon yon starry spheres,
  Which brightly shine from out the dark blue sky,
Nor call'd to mind the friends of other years,
The hopes, the joys, the transient smiles and tears,
  Gushing from out where buried memories lie,
  And waking the full heart to highest ecstacy!

Oh, what a glorious vision, when the moon,
  Silently gliding through her pathless way,
Has reached the extremest point of her high noon,
Shedding o'er this our earth her radiant boon,
  While twinkling stars, and orbs of steadier ray,
  Shine with a light that mocks the intenser glare of day!

Oh, who has ever gazed on such a scene,
  Nor thought the spirits of the blest were there?
Who, that beholds not in that blue serene,
Bright isles, the abodes of pleasures yet unseen,
  Except by those who, freed from mortal care,
  Have winged their raptur'd flight to realms of upper air?

The mother, who has watched with sleepless eye
  Her babe, and rocked with tireless foot the while,
And when she saw the little sufferer die,
Bow'd her meek head and wept in agony,
  Fancies she hears, in yonder starry isle,
  Her little cherub's voice, and sees his angel smile.

Oh, ye departed spirits of my sires,
  And ye, the loved ones of my childhood's days,
While now I look on yonder heavenly fires,
Methinks I hear you tune your seraph lyres,
  Methinks I see you bend your pitying gaze
  On him who still must tread alone earth's gloomy maze!

Thou angel spirit, who so oft didst sing
  My infant cares to sleep upon thy breast,
Let me but hear the rustling of thy wing,
Around thy child its guardian influence fling!
  Oh, come thou from the islands of the blest,
  And bear my weary soul up to thy sainted rest!

Can we forget departed friends? Ah, no!
  Within our hearts their memory buried lies;
The thought that where they are, we too shall go,
Will cast a light o'er darkest scenes of woe;—
  For to their own blest dwellings in the skies,
  The souls whom CHRIST sets free, exultingly shall rise.

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ON A FUTURE STATE OF REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS:

A Sermon

BY THE REV. WILLIAM H. HART,

RECTOR OF ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, WALDEN, ORANGE COUNTY, NEW YORK.

Matthew xxv. 46.—"*And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.*

The doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments, which is every where set forth in the Gospel, is of most serious importance, and calculated to make the deepest impression upon the mind of every human being. A doctrine which our blessed Savior was at peculiar pains to inculcate, as if determined that none should fall into error of life, through misapprehension of what shall be hereafter. A doctrine set forth in the plainest and most decisive terms, in order that, on a subject of such vast moment, we might be fully and clearly instructed. Indeed, so plain and unequivocal is the language of the Gospel, in relation to this subject, that not one of us will ever be able to plead ignorance in excuse, and if any of us should hereafter meet the condemnation of the wicked, his punishment will be aggravated by the reflection, that he sinned with his eyes open, and violated the righteous laws of a most holy God, with a perfect knowledge of the horrible results. Nothing can be more interesting to the heart of man, or more calculated to exercise a powerful influence over the life and conversation of this present scene, than the subject now proposed, and which ought frequently to be the theme of serious and solemn meditation. Agreeably to the whole tenor of the Gospel, we learn, that when the breath of man shall cease from his nostrils, when his corporeal frame shall undergo that great and mysterious change created by death, his soul, his spiritual and immortal part, shall still survive. Being freed from its tenement of clay, it shall remain in a state of conscious existence, until the time appointed by the Father for the consummation of all things. Then, at the sound of the archangel's trump, the bodies of men, which

have long slumbered in the dust, shall be roused to newness of life; freed from their grosser particles, and prepared for the reception of the soul immortal. Then shall they all be summoned before "the judgment seat of CHRIST," to receive their *final* sentence, according to the deeds done in the body,—and, according to the sentence which will *then* be pronounced, the destiny of every human soul will be fixed *forever*. The wicked *shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.* In the chapter from which our text is taken, our Savior gives a circumstantial account of the dread ceremonies of the *great* day, *when the son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.* The scene which will *then* follow, we shall not attempt to describe, convinced that when the awful day shall arrive, all human descriptions will be found to be beggared by the *reality*. In the simple language of the Redeemer, *Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.* Passing by the truly interesting transactions of that *great* day, we propose to employ a few moments in directing your attention to the final results, and may GOD grant, that while we meditate on the blessedness which awaits the righteous in the life to come, and the *tremendous* consequences of guilt, as shown in the condemnation of the wicked, we may be induced to flee from the *one*, and obtain the *other*.

That we may treat the subject in proper order, it may be necessary to remark, that, agreeably to the tenor of Scripture, we are taught to believe, that ere the foundations of the world were laid, there existed an infinite number of created, celestial intelligences, which we denominate angels, dwelling in the presence of GOD, and blessed beyond compare, in the participation of his glory.

That one of these, elevated in dignity above the rest, became possessed with pride and ambition, rebelled against the authority of his Maker, incurred the divine wrath, and, together with an innumerable company of his followers, was cast out from the presence of GOD, and doomed to dwell for ever in outer darkness. Thus GOD *spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment. The angels that kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation,* GOD *hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.* We also learn that after the creation of the world, this chief of evil spirits—this prince of darkness, seduced our first parents from their allegiance to the GOD of Heaven, and involved them, along with himself, in one common and everlasting ruin. That in mercy to our fallen race, GOD devised a way of escape, through the blood of the atonement, by which all who believe in CHRIST shall finally be restored to divine favor, and readmitted to the presence of GOD in Heaven; while those who reject the offers of reconciliation, shall remain under condemnation, and be doomed to dwell with devils and damned spirits in the place of eternal torment; *and these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.* Such, as briefly stated, being the situation in which we stand—such being the *inevitable* results which await our probationary state on earth, it becomes matter of deepest interest and concern to inquire into the nature, extent and duration of those rewards and punishments, which, on the dissolution of our mortal frame, must thus be awarded to every soul of man, and it should cause every one in this assembly tremblingly and *earnestly* to inquire of his heart, which of these states and conditions of being is to be my future lot? O may the question come home to every heart, and induce us to rest not satisfied, till we obtain a satisfactory answer!

In examining the Scriptures, in relation to the subject now before us, we perceive that the punishments of the wicked in a future state, are set forth in terms suited to the capacities and apprehensions of men. As we can form no idea of invisible things, except by comparison with those that are visible, it became neces-

sary for the inspired writers, in their revelations concerning the eternal world, to represent the torments of the damned, under the similitude of objects with which we are conversant and familiar upon earth. Yet the very comparisons introduced—the very terms made use of, serve to impress the mind with the solemn and *startling* conviction, that no object on earth—no power of language, can fully represent, or describe the intensity of suffering which the wicked will undergo. They carry us to the full extent of human imagination, and there leave us, convinced that after all that has been said, no eye of man hath seen, nor ear heard, nor heart hath conceived, the height, and depth, and length, and breadth. In order to appreciate the descriptions which we find in the sacred writings, so far as our feeble understandings can appreciate them, we must bear in mind that they relate to the awful realities of a spiritual and immaterial world, and therefore are to be taken in a figurative and not in a literal sense. It would be absurd to suppose, for a moment, that in the world of spirits there are actually *furnaces of fire*, and *chains of iron*, and *lakes of fire and brimstone;* but we are to understand, that by the pains and torments which these material substances are capable of inflicting upon our mortal bodies, are faintly represented the horrors of a condemning conscience—the tortures of a soul that is banished forever from the presence of its God. Neither are we to understand that there is any particular place, any specified location in nature, that is destined to receive the condemned soul, as the place of its torment; for this would be inconsistent with the language of Scripture in other respects. But we are taught to believe, that an accusing and condemning conscience, the remembrance of despised mercies, the abiding sense of divine wrath, and the utter hopelessness of ever obtaining the beatitudes of heaven, will constitute the torments of the wicked—and were such a soul to gain admittance even into the centre of heaven, so to speak, it would carry its hell along with it, and would remain equally and forever miserable. The more deeply and intently we reflect on this subject, the more we perceive, that there must be something in the condition and mode of existence of a disembodied spirit, of which we can now form no adequate conception; and while we keep this in mind, we

shall be better able to avoid superstition and absurdity, and to entertain some idea of the spirituality, both of the rewards and punishments that will be allotted to us in a future state.

Such, my brethren, is the *nature* of those punishments which will overwhelm the guilty soul, in the great day of retribution, and with this view of the subject, we will proceed to consider the *extent* and *duration* of those punishments, as they are set forth in the sacred writings.

And first, as to their *extent*. As the Scriptures declare it to be impossible for the mind of man to conceive the extent of happiness which awaits the righteous, so we may consider it equally impossible to conceive the extent of misery which awaits the wicked. To be cast out and banished from the presence of God. To be deprived of the glorious light of Heaven. To be compelled to associate with devils, and all evil spirits, in that outer darkness through which no ray of light can ever penetrate—to be continually subject to the accusations of a condemning conscience—to be abandoned to the uncontrolled dominion of every evil passion—to witness afar off the blessedness of the saints in light, and to know that that blessedness is lost for ever,—these will create a horror and despair which it is not in the power of man to describe or imagine. The only idea which we can form of the sufferings which the sinner will be doomed to undergo, must be drawn from sensible objects, and these, as represented in Scripture, serve rather to show that no power of human language, or thought, can reach the reality. The torments of the damned are represented, in the first place, under the similitude of a devouring fire. As we can hardly imagine a more exquisite torture than that which is inflicted upon the body by the action of fire, so this is used to express the torment which the just judgment of God will inflict upon the soul of the sinner. *The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom, all things which offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire, there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. It is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet, to be cast*

into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched—where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched. He will gather the wheat into his garner, but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable. The LORD *thy* GOD *is a consuming fire. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living* GOD. *For fiery indignation shall devour the adversaries. The devil was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever. And whosoever was not found written in the Lamb's book of life, was cast into the lake of fire.* Such will be the effect of divine wrath, that the soul will shrink under it, as every object in nature shrinks under the influence of a devouring flame. The soul, under condemnation, is represented by the prisoner, immured in a dungeon and loaded with fetters of iron. We can hardly conceive a situation more truly deplorable, than that of the poor criminal confined within the dark and gloomy walls of his prison, and doomed to drag out his life under a load of chains. *And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.* The torments of hell are represented by the pains and distresses which are inflicted upon the human body by disease. Their effects upon the soul, are like the gnawings of the worm which consumes the dead body, with this difference, that the body is soon consumed, but the soul can never die. In short, every distress and every anguish which we are capable of enduring in this life, is made use of to show forth the anguish and horror that will overwhelm the guilty soul. GOD is represented as filled with wrath and indignation against the wicked, not that such emotions can ever have power to disturb the peace and blessedness of the ALMIGHTY, but that we may understand the weight of woe which will be the lot of those who will be rejected by GOD in the great day of account. Oh who can endure the wrath of an offended GOD? who can dwell with everlasting burnings? who can sustain the misery and torment of the condemned soul, so powerfully represented by the language of Scripture? What will be the horror, the agony, and despair, that will seize upon the guilty soul, when

the decree of eternal banishment will be thundered from the throne of judgment? Which of you, my brethren, will be the subjects of this dreadful sentence? O! deal candidly, I beseech you, with your own hearts, and judge yourselves now, that ye be not judged hereafter. Take warning from the subject now before us, and be assured that, however you may now disregard it, the day is advancing—that awful day which no mortal can avoid, when the blessings of heaven, or the pains and torments of hell, must be awarded to every human soul. Knowing the terrors of the LORD, we endeavor to persuade men, and O! that you could be persuaded so to reflect upon the tremendous consequences of guilt, as seen in the future punishments of the wicked, as to use all diligence to make your calling and election sure; and by timely repentance and amendment of life, to escape the threatened vengeance of a just and holy GOD! Our ideas of those future punishments which await the wicked in the world to come, are heightened beyond compare, by the solemn reflection that they can never know an end. *These shall go away into* EVERLASTING *punishment. Dreadful* as will be the weight of that punishment—a weight, which, if laid upon mortal man for one instant, would crush him to earth, still it must last *forever*,—and when millions of ages shall have passed by, still the condemned soul must endure its torment, and must continue to endure, without the least prospect, without a shadow of hope, that it will ever experience the *least* mitigation! And however men may attempt to explain away terms of Scripture, and to establish the opinion that hell is but a temporary purgatory, still the word of GOD is sure, and cannot be broken, and it impresses upon the pains of hell, as well as the joys of heaven, the awful character of *eternity!* They are declared to be *eternal* and *everlasting;* and there can be but one meaning justly attached to those most ominous words. Oh how awful the idea, that, according to the decisions of the day of judgment, so must our condition be through an endless eternity. What must be the horror and despair of the soul which, in the midst of its torment, can see no end!—which looks forward through eternity, as over a boundless ocean, which contains no friendly shore—no place of rest, where the weary soul may gain a respite from its pain and woe. Not a ray of hope—not a beam of consolation can penetrate

the gloom, to alleviate the horrors of despair. Oh who of us will ever be placed in this awful condition? Who of us will descend into the bottomless pit, there to endure this exquisite misery—this dreadful despair—this eternity of torment! It is a question of most solemn import—and Oh, how should our souls tremble at the bare possibility, that we may be included in the number of those unhappy ones. How should the mere supposition of it, rouse us from our slumbers, and lead us to call upon GOD for his help, and to put forth all our strength, that we may escape the wrath to come. It will be unnecessary for us here, had we time to do it, to describe the blessed estate of those, who will hereafter be admitted to the joy of their LORD. The happiness which awaits the righteous, is represented in Scripture as inconceivable and perfect in degree, and eternal in duration,—and we might dwell with rapture and delight on the happy condition of those who will be permitted to dwell in the presence of their GOD—in that presence where is fulness of joy for evermore.

Thus, brethren, *life* and *death*, *heaven* and *hell*, are set before you. *Heaven*, with all its attendant joys and beatitudes, and *hell*, with all its horrors, its misery, and despair. One of these two conditions must be *your* everlasting portion. Now is your time to determine what shall be your future lot, and may GOD, in infinite mercy, incline your hearts to choose aright. Can you endure the thought, that in hell you will lift up your eyes, "being in torment?" That you will cast your longing gaze toward heaven, the place of everlasting blessedness,—that you will there behold the companions of your earthly pilgrimage, and those who were *near* and *dear* to you in life, happy in the enjoyment of their Father's love, while you will be compelled to *feel* and to *know* that that happiness you can never enjoy? Does not your soul shrink within itself at the very thought? Oh, why should you be idle, and careless, while such an alternative lies before you? Why should you risk the safety of your immortal soul, when you know that such awful consequences must ensue. May GOD enable you to perceive the danger of neglecting his "great salvation," and incline your hearts to come to CHRIST, that you may "have life." And may the solemn—the emphatic words of our text ever dwell in your minds and quicken your resolves.

REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS,

OR,

THE FINAL JUDGMENT.

All ye that love the LORD, rejoice,
  And let your songs be new;
Amidst the church with cheerful voice,
  His later wonders show.

When CHRIST His judgment seat ascends,
  And bids the world appear,
Thrones are prepared for all his friends,
  Who humbly lov'd him here.

Then shall they rule with iron rod,
  Nations that dar'd rebel;
And join the sentence of their GOD,
  On tyrants doom'd to hell.

Saints should be joyful in their king,
  E'en on a dying bed;
And like the souls in glory sing,
  For GOD *shall raise the dead!*

The LORD takes pleasure in the just,
  Whom sinners treat with scorn;
The meek that lie, despis'd, in dust,
  Salvation shall adorn.